

ZCZC LBBPNSLBB DEF
TTAA00 KLBB DDHMM

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE LUBBOCK TX
600 AM CST TUE MAR 4 2003

WRITTEN BY NWS LUBBOCK
...CONTINUING SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN TEXAS...

LIGHTNING FACTS AND SAFETY RULES

THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 25 MILLION CLOUD-TO-GROUND LIGHTNING FLASHES EACH YEAR. WHILE LIGHTNING CAN BE FASCINATING TO WATCH...IT IS ALSO EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. DURING THE PAST 30 YEARS...LIGHTNING KILLED AN AVERAGE OF 73 AMERICANS AND INJURED ANOTHER 300. THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS KILLED BY LIGHTNING TYPICALLY EXCEEDS THE NUMBER OF DEATHS RESULTING FROM BOTH TORNADOES AND HURRICANES.

FORTY EIGHT TEXANS HAVE BEEN KILLED BY LIGHTNING SINCE 1988. MOST OF THESE DEATHS OCCURRED DURING THE SPRING AND SUMMER MONTHS WHEN THE FREQUENCY OF THUNDERSTORMS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PEAK. DURING THE PAST 40 YEARS...TEXAS RANKED SECOND IN THE COUNTRY BEHIND FLORIDA IN TOTAL NUMBER OF LIGHTNING FATALITIES.

BY DEFINITION...ALL THUNDERSTORMS PRODUCE LIGHTNING AND DURING A THUNDERSTORM EACH FLASH OF CLOUD-TO-GROUND LIGHTNING IS A POTENTIAL KILLER. ALTHOUGH SOME VICTIMS ARE STRUCK DIRECTLY BY THE MAIN VISIBLE LIGHTNING STROKE...MANY OTHER VICTIMS ARE STRUCK AS THE CURRENT MOVES IN AND ALONG THE GROUND. WHILE VIRTUALLY ALL PEOPLE TAKE SOME PROTECTIVE ACTION DURING A THUNDERSTORM...MANY LEAVE THEMSELVES VULNERABLE TO BEING STRUCK BY LIGHTNING AS THUNDERSTORMS APPROACH...DEPART...OR ARE NEARBY.

LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE AS FAR AS 10 MILES AWAY FROM THE RAIN AREA IN A THUNDERSTORM...WHICH IS ABOUT THE DISTANCE FROM A STORM THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO HEAR THE THUNDER. IF YOU CAN HEAR THE THUNDER THEN YOU ARE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF THAT STORM.

FOLLOW THE 30/30 LIGHTNING SAFETY RULE WHEN THUNDERSTORMS THREATEN YOUR AREA. GO INDOORS IF AFTER SEEING LIGHTNING YOU CANNOT COUNT TO 30 BEFORE HEARING THUNDER. STAY INDOORS FOR 30 MINUTES AFTER HEARING THE LAST CLAP OF THUNDER. FOLLOWING THESE GUIDELINES WILL BETTER ENSURE THAT YOU ARE OUT OF HARMS WAY WHEN THE STORM APPROACHES YOUR AREA AND THAT YOU DO NOT PREMATURELY RESUME OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AS THE STORM MOVES AWAY.

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